April 2008

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Virginia Tech

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Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.58188/1941-8043.1138
Available at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/jcba/vol0/iss3/17

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Responding to Campus Violence

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Virginia Tech

NCSCBHEP

April 7, 2008
Virginia Tech President Charles Steger requested an internal review to examine the interface between the university’s student counseling services, academic affairs, judicial affairs and the legal system.
Findings

• Virginia Tech has
  
  • a responsive, student-centered system that is designed to identify and assist students in need in a variety of ways and to hold all students accountable for their behavior within the university community.
  
  • In addition, a network of structures is in place to identify and respond to students who are more acutely distressed.
Recommendations

• Expanding Capacity in the System
• Improving Communication in the System
• Connecting Strategies for Identifying and Supporting at-Risk Students to the Broader University Plan for Campus safety
Expanding Capacity in the System

- Refining the Care Team
- Creating a Threat Assessment Team
- Expanding Case Management Capacity
Improving Communication in the System

- establishing a central university contact
- conducting on-going training for personnel on the application of the Family Educational Privacy Act (FERPA), and
- implementing a new policy for emergency notification information for students.
Connecting Strategies for Identifying and Supporting at-Risk Students to the Broader University Plan for Campus safety

- An important feature of any comprehensive approach and plan for campus safety is that the pieces or key elements form an integrated whole.
• Expanding Training of Administrators, Faculty, and Staff in Violence Prevention
• Extending the University-wide Violence Prevention Policy
• Building Community to Promote Individual and Community Well-Being
Conclusion

• Many of the recommendations made in this report are
  • systemic in nature, and
  • only a piece of the larger picture of campus safety, and must be linked directly to other efforts underway to enhance campus safety.
  • Any system needs to be dynamic in nature to adjust to the changes that continually emerge from the needs of the university community and new lessons learned from on-going evaluation of the system and best practices of our peers.
Town Hall Meeting – March 19, 2008

“Of the major initiatives, all have been thoroughly reviewed and most have seen substantial progress towards completion.”

- President Steger
Recommendations under consideration

- but for which an implementation decision has not been made, include:

  • monitoring some areas of campus with closed-circuit security cameras,

  • adding a card key access control system to some academic and administrative buildings, and

  • installing electronic displays in classrooms so that alerts could be broadcasted there.
17 initiatives were prioritized

• Many of those initiatives have already been substantially implemented. Highlights of what has been done include:
  • VT Alerts has been launched,
  • All interior locks for general assignment classrooms have been replaced to allow rooms to be locked from inside.
Initiatives (cont’d)

• Access to mail rooms has been separated from access to the residence hall in which the mail room is located.

• A threat assessment team chaired by Police Chief Wendell Flinchum has been formed.

• An interim director of emergency preparedness planning was named.

• Eleven additional full-time positions have been allocated to the police department.
Initiatives (cont’d)

• Case management capacity has been expanded to ensure services are available to students in need.
  • Three new case managers and three new counselors have been hired.
  • Policies and procedures have been reviewed, revised and developed to ensure appropriate mental health treatment.
  • The Care Team, the central structure for identifying and responding to students at risk has been refined and its leadership expanded.
References

- Complete news report found at:
- More information to be found at:
  http://www.president.vt.edu/
- Photos taken from (unless noted):
  http://www.april16archive.org/browse/?objectType=3/